WebBuyer

SITE REVIEWS

COMPILED BY KEVIN SAVETZ
AND ABIGAIL CRANE

SITE REVIEWS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

PC SHOPPING SITES

The sites in this listing sell products from multiple manufacturers. See the sites under "PC Direct Vendors," or check the *Computer Shopper* Source Directory ***(cgi.zdnet.com/slink?8145)***, for more information on PC manufacturers offering only their own brands (such as Dell and Gateway).

aberdeeninc.com

👍 volume pricing • smooth navigation • easy ordering
👎 limited software selection

Built for the savvy consumer who *craves technical information*, **Aberdeen** offers extensive specs on a wide variety of computers and accessories.

accessmicro.com

👍 smooth navigation • easy ordering

Shoppers will enjoy the selection at **Access Micro,** which offers 45,000 items ranging from memory to T1 routers. The help desk and hardware guide provide aid to first-time visitors.

www.applied-computer.com

👍 smooth navigation
👎 handling fee on orders less than $200

Selling PCs and supplies since 1984, **Applied Computer** promises to match or beat any advertised price. The company stocks 800,000 products—be sure to skim the list of the site's 1,000 most popular ones.

blackbox.com

👍 smooth navigation

Specializing in cabling and network-connectivity products, **Black Box's** extensive 900-page catalog of storage, LAN, switch, surge-protection, and other accessories can be viewed online or off.

buy.com

👍 low-price guarantee • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Buy.com comprises a wide array of e-commerce sites, including BuySoft (for software), BuyGames, BuyBooks, and BuyVideos. BuyComp is devoted to computer hardware, including systems, PDAs, peripherals, and networking equipment.

cablestogo.com

👍 hard-to-find tools and test equipment
👎 $30 minimum order requirement

Cables To Go sells every conceivable cable, cord, or wire your PC might need, from standard SCSI to esoteric system-specific cables. You'll also find networking products and all sorts of adapters.

cdw.com

👍 list of rebates and coupons • business leasing options available • smooth navigation • easy ordering

CDW offers an impressive array of hardware and software. The comparison tool lets shoppers create side-by-side comparisons in many product categories.

compuplus.com

👍 easy ordering • good return policy

Comp-U-Plus highlights its customer service, offering a 30-day money-back guarantee and free technical support. Its catalog isn't the biggest, but plenty of name brands are represented, and prices are reasonable.

compusa.com

👍 smooth navigation • easy ordering

CompUSA is a well-organized site offering a fair amount of PC hardware, accessories, and software, with electronics and video-game gadgets rounding out the selection. Don't overlook the clearance section.

computability.com

👍 handy side-by-side product-comparison tool • smooth navigation • easy ordering

Beginning its mail-order business in 1982, **ComputAbility** has aged considerably better than the Commodore 64 you bought that year. The site offers desktop, notebook, and handheld computers, plus a wide variety of peripherals and software.

computercomputer.com

👍 easy ordering

Interested in buying components and piecing together your own PC? **Computercomputer.com** sells barebones systems that'll make a good starting point.

computers4sure.com

👍 smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Fifteen diverse departments offer a wide range of products, from networking equipment and peripherals to PDAs and scanners. **Computers4Sure** has top brands and more than 60,000 products, and a running total is always onscreen.

computershopper.com

👍 smooth navigation

Computer Shopper's own computer-buying site, **computershopper.com,** provides access to product reviews, interactive guides on choosing a desktop or a notebook, and How to Buy sections on popular product categories.

computersurplusoutlet.com

👍 consignment service

Frugal shoppers and do-it-yourselfers will feel at home at **Computer Surplus Outlet,** a computer hardware liquidator. The company sells closeouts,

overstocks, refurbished equipment, and liquidation items at bargain-basement prices. You can find complete, assembly-required Pentium systems for less than $100.

cqk.com

smooth navigation

Designed for folks who know what they want, **Computer Quick** offers plain-box, best-buy, and closeout merchandise in addition to a selection of more than 90,000 items in regular stock.

cyberrebate.com

"100% Off" tab shows 300 products whose rebates equal their cost • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

rebates take 10 to 14 weeks to process

CyberRebate.com only sells products that come with money-back rebates. You'll find a small selection of computer accessories and software. In addition, the site offers electronics, office supplies, toys, and kitchen items.

cyberwarehouse.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

may take up to three days to ship

If you're the kind of shopper who can't pass up a bargain-basement sale or an outlet mall, this site may be for you. **CyberWarehouse** offers PCs, monitors, printers, and other peripherals.

dalco.com

overnight shipping • international and APO/FPO orders • good return policy

Dalco stocks everything from motherboards to monitors. Bargain hunters will want to start with this site's specials, which are shown on the home page and change regularly.

www.damark.com

discounts for Damark club members • smooth navigation • good return policy

Damark offers a variety of PCs and notebooks, as well as accessories, digital cameras, and home electronics. Factory-serviced items are available, and the outlet area delivers low prices on items in short supply.

direct411.com

easy ordering

Direct411 offers an impressive selection of 50,000 in-stock hardware and software products. The catalog includes servers, memory upgrades, storage devices, digital cameras, and software.

dirtcheapdrives.com

detailed archive of tech-support information • quantity discounts available • smooth navigation

If you can store data on it, this site sells it. **Dirt Cheap Drives** offers deals on hard drives, CD-ROM and DVD

SITE REVIEWS

hardware, drive arrays, and hard-to-find laptop storage. This 10-year-old company also stocks mounting kits, media, and other accessories.

ebworld.com

can search for age-appropriate games • lists release dates for new game titles • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Electronics Boutique is a gamer's paradise. Here you'll find game software and add-ons for your PC and your Mac, as well as titles for Dreamcast, Nintendo 64, and other game consoles. Check out the new releases, best-sellers, and gaming news.

ecost.com

same-day shipment on most orders • photos and warranty details for most products • smooth navigation • easy ordering

The **eCost.com** catalog spans the full realm of PC hardware and software, including ready-to-use systems, peripherals, accessories, software, and games. Featured specials in each category point shoppers to the best deals, and fastidiously organized subcategories help them find the exact products they need.

egghead.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Egghead.com shoppers can browse the hardware, software, and electronics "superstores," or check out the deals on surplus computer merchandise. In addition, the site also sells home electronics, sports and fitness merchandise, and travel packages.

electrified.com

30-day guarantee on all items • se habla español • good return policy

Looking for deep discounts on older laptops, notebooks, monitors, and printers? **Electrified** specializes in products that are discontinued, second-inventory, refurbished, off-lease, or otherwise not state-of-the-art. Systems range from new Pentium II laptops to under-$200 used 486s.

elinux.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

The **eLinux.com** site offers hardware and software for users of the Linux operating system. Desktop and notebook systems for sale here have been tested with Linux and don't come bundled with that "other" OS.

fatbrain.com

new-title notification by e-mail • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Fatbrain.com is a bookstore devoted to computer books, documentation, and some of the most technical tomes available. The site's eMatter service lets anyone self-publish books, articles, and research reports, making them available for download for free or for a fee.

firstsource.com

real-time online customer service • smooth navigation • easy ordering

Focused on the technology needs of businesses, **firstsource.com** offers a broad range of choices in computer hardware, rack-mount systems, network tools, phone systems, wiring, and business software.

gogocity.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

You'll get beyond **GoGoCity.com's** funny name when you see its excellent selection of computer hardware. You'll find desktop and notebook computers, peripherals, software, and PC accessories of all types. Detailed product information, often with pictures, rounds out the catalog.

CHECK IT OUT!

Provantage Purveys PC Product Deals

provantage.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Provantage's no-nonsense site offers PC products from more than 1,000 manufacturers. The selection includes software, hardware, books, and training materials. The site's Personal Tracking List feature lets customers build a list of product bookmarks, then monitor the products' prices and availability for up to two months. A Stay Informed section provides quick access to new products, new versions of old products, and items featuring manufacturer rebates. The Microsoft area showcases academic editions of software, BackOffice add-ons, and development tools. Provantage also specializes in international orders, and gives credit to commercial, academic, and government accounts.

SITE REVIEWS

www.hardwarestreet.com

1 percent of all profits goes to the National Forest Foundation • smooth navigation

Shoppers in the market for hardware, networking products, and software can choose from more than 40,000 products at **HardwareStreet.com.** Affiliated sites DownloadDrive.com and SoftwareStreet.com offer thousands of software choices.

idot.com

equipment leases available • onsite-service warranty for all systems • easy ordering

Look to **iDot.com** for preconfigured or custom-built PCs. To configure your own system, just select from the impressive list of add-ons and watch the price change accordingly. The Peripheral Outlet offers deals on USB devices, DVD drives, cameras, and other add-ons.

insight.com

separate sites for the U.S., Canada, Germany, and the U.K. • smooth navigation • easy ordering

With more than 100,000 items, **Insight** offers an impressive and easy-to-navigate catalog of hardware and software products. More than 90 free newsletters feature new-product news, closeout specials, and tech news.

intellesale.com

"make us an offer" function lets shoppers haggle over the prices of certain products • smooth navigation

most orders are shipped in 7 to 10 days

IntelleSale.com offers a wide variety of new and refurbished computer systems from major manufacturers, plus peripherals, accessories, and software. Many product listings note only model numbers and the most basic specs.

www.jandr.com

3D demos of selected products • smooth navigation

Whether you're shopping for an Aptiva or an iMac, hardware and accessories abound at **J&R Computer World,** making this a one-stop shop for many. You'll also find a huge selection of digital and traditional film cameras.

laptoptravel.com

Laptop Travel sells portable-computing and international-travel gear, including electrical adapters, modem converters and couplers, and security accessories. You'll find traditional and "camouflaged" laptop carrying cases, laptop RAM, and storage add-ons.

mcglen.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

McGlen Micro's specialized searches can help you find memory and other accessories compatible with your computer, printer, and copier. Shoppers can design a custom system to be built and shipped in two days.

megahaus.com

lifetime technical support on all products • CD-mastering and other utility software • smooth navigation

MegaHaus calls itself "the drive authority." It offers a wide variety of storage solutions, including hard drives, DVD drives, RAID, and removable storage. A technical-information area features FAQs and specs on hardware from DVD players to drive brackets.

mei-microcenter.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

MEI-Micro Center offers new and refurbished desktops from Compaq, eMachines, Hewlett-Packard, and PowerSpec, as well as a small selection of peripherals. Rummage around the bargain bin for deals on closeouts, refurbished units, and overstocks.

memman.com

all memory carries a lifetime warranty • good return policy

When it's time to upgrade the memory in your desktop or laptop, don't forget **Memory Man.** Besides memory chips, the site sells processors, motherboards, hard drives, heat sinks, and batteries for many types of notebooks.

memory4less.com

company tests all products shipped • smooth navigation

Memory 4 Less offers low prices on a wide variety of RAM, including older, hard-to-find types. If you don't know the memory requirements of your computer or digital camera, it will tell you. The site also sells CPUs, motherboards, and laptop hard drives.

microx-press.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

MicroX-Press offers detailed information about most products, as well as a handy "E-mail me when this product is priced at..." notification feature and a PC configuration tool. Customers are invited to rate and review products they've tried.

motherboards.com

With a wide selection of motherboards from seven manufacturers, do-it-yourselfers can pick the perfect innards for their new PCs at **Motherboards.com.** This Web store offers CPUs, memory, video cards, drives, and other internal essentials.

www.mwave.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Multiwave Direct's friendly site sells a multitude of hardware and software products. In addition to PC systems and peripherals, this Web store stocks notebook accessories, videoconferencing equipment, and network tools.

www.mwmicro.com

24-hour technical support • lease options • smooth navigation

MidWest Micro maintains an impressive catalog of PC hardware, accessories, and software. Shoppers will be delighted to find instant rebates on some products. The site's exemplary support center offers a troubleshooting wizard, downloadable manuals, and a searchable archive of technical documents.

www.necx.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

$25 surcharge for phone orders

NECX Direct offers all manner of hardware, accessories, and software. The Showcases section highlights products in specialty categories, such as PDAs or USB peripherals. The How to Buy guides offer impartial advice on selecting and installing common PC add-ons.

neutronet.com

purchases earn credit points toward your next order • smooth navigation • easy ordering

Neutron Computers carries thousands of computer systems and peripherals from nearly 400 different manufacturers and distributors. The site's handy toolbox offers easy access to best buys, help for first-time buyers, and a massive manufacturer directory.

www.notebooksuperstore.com

devoted exclusively to portable computers

Notebook Superstore sells more than 70 different laptop models from eight manufacturers. It offers technical details about each model, so you can easily zero in on the best portable for your needs. Corporate accounts receive lease options and volume discounts.

123cdc.com

smooth navigation

Computer Discount Center offers a wide variety of PC add-ons, including storage, digital cameras, and displays. Shoppers will find competitive prices and detailed product information.

officedepot.com

free next-day delivery on orders of more than $50 within local trading areas • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Office Depot sells everything for the office: files to filing cabinets, briefcases to bookcases. The site's computer category offers a selection of prebuilt machines from major manu facturers. Office Depot provides free

downloadable business forms, letter templates, and spreadsheet templates.

www.officemax.com

free next-day delivery on orders of more than $50 • low-price guarantee • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

A few clicks at **OfficeMax** can transform a bare room into a fully furnished office. You'll find computers, other business machines, office furniture, and even paper and pencils under this virtual roof.

onvia.com

free shipping • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Onvia.com offers a rich variety of products, including hardware, software, telephone systems, office furniture, and office products. Shoppers can ask a product specialist questions at the help forum or search previous postings.

outpost.com

site can be viewed in 13 languages • free overnight delivery on all items • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Outpost.com is a lush home to hardware, accessories, and software. Visit the Game Outpost to get your playtime fix, or bid against other shoppers for hardware in the OutpostAuctions area. Get gift ideas for every person and budget in the Shopping Ideas section.

www.palmgear.com

mailing lists offer news, specials, and user tips • smooth navigation

Palm-device users will appreciate the extensive selection of free and commercial downloadable programs at **PalmGear HQ.** The site features lists of the newest Palm programs, as well as essential software picks. Shoppers can buy handheld hardware and accessories, including carrying cases and styli.

pcconnection.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

In business for more than 15 years, **PC Connection** offers good deals on a colossal variety of products. Smart Selectors ease searching for shoppers looking for systems, cameras, printers, monitors, or memory to fit specific guidelines.

pcmall.com

free lifetime technical support • smooth navigation • easy ordering

Many folks are familiar with **PC Mall's** thick, colorful catalog, and the online version is just as dense. PC Mall has a vast selection of computers, hardware, and software.

pcprogress.com

smooth navigation

If you're in the market for PC components and peripherals, check out **PC Progress.** The site specializes in cost-effective memory with a lifetime warranty. You'll find a large selection of memory, including notebook, iMac, and printer RAM.

pcstop.com

same-day shipping

This purveyor of hardware and software offers 50,000 computer-related products from 1,300 manufacturers. **PC Stop's** unusual interface makes shoppers start with a search—you can't just browse.

pcwonders.com

corporate and educational accounts available • smooth navigation • easy ordering

At **pcWonders.com,** you'll find more than 90,000 hardware and software products. Additional categories include car audio, home electronics, PDAs, and bargain blowouts.

pczone.com

printable rebate coupons • smooth navigation • easy ordering

handling fee on smaller orders

PC Zone boasts an impressive product selection of all things PC-related,

SITE REVIEWS

including desktops, notebooks, printers, monitors, storage devices, CPU upgrades, and network equipment—plus PDAs, digital cameras, and portable MP3 players. You'll also find links to an auction area and other stores: **Mac Zone** and **Zones Business Solutions.**

provantage.com

Extended listing this month. See p. 200.

www.qualityclick.com

leasing options • easy ordering • good return policy

The **Quality Click** Web store covers all the basics for PC users, including hardware, networking supplies, accessories, and software. Technical support is available by a toll-free phone number, fax, or e-mail, and sales support by live chat.

shopper.cnet.com

The **CNET Shopper** search engine takes the guesswork out of finding a deal on hardware, software, and accessories. The site tracks the prices of more than 100,000 products in 100 stores.

shoppingplanet.com

Do-it-yourselfers will appreciate **Shopping Planet's** inventory of barebones systems, add-on cards, and kits. An arm of the site specializing in software and hardware for the Linux operating system is available at ***shoppingplanet.com/cm/linux.asp.***

www.sparco.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Sparco's catalog of more than 130,000 products makes it simple to shop for computer equipment. Looking for that something extra? Check out the list of products that come bundled with "free stuff."

www.spidergear.com

deals on refurbished equipment

SpiderGear offers computers, cameras, home audio and video products, car audio items, and appliances. A $10 optional membership entitles you to reduced prices, an annual rebate, and advance notice of new products.

www.ssdonline.com

the E-list service stores your product preferences • smooth navigation

At **State Street Direct's** Web store, shoppers will discover a huge selection of consumer electronics, in addition to computers and imaging products.

CHECK IT OUT!

TC Computers Markets Motherboards and More

tccomputers.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

In business since 1988, and recently back on the Web after a complete site overhaul, **TC Computers** sells fully configured systems, motherboards, and name-brand peripherals. The company's specialty, though, is motherboards—it tests each one prior to shipping and bundles a step-by-step installation video.

The site offers many helpful features. The System Configurator helps those building their own PCs. Customer reviews are posted on most products. And if you need to brush up on your technical knowledge, Big Ed's Tech Site, an arm of TC Computers, regularly serves up details about new motherboards, BIOS upgrades, and other important information.

Digital photographers will find many items of interest.

staples.com

peruse your history of past purchases, even months later • liberal price-matching policy • smooth navigation • good return policy

Even if a **Staples** store is just down the block, you might prefer this elegant Web site when shopping for computer accessories, software, and office supplies. If you order similar items often, you can set up personalized lists to avoid filling out a new form every time.

2for1inkjet.com

free shipping on orders of six or more items, or at least $200 • smooth navigation • good return policy

If your printer is putting you in the poorhouse, pay a visit to **2 For 1 Inkjet,** where you'll find two-for-one supplies for every brand of inkjet and laser printer, copier, and fax machine.

3re.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Specializing in used computers and rebuilt electronic equipment, **3Re.com** takes open-box returns from original equipment manufacturers, and repairs and repackages the machines. Offerings include desktops, notebooks, printers, network equipment, and software.

tccomputers.com

Extended listing this month. See p. 202.

tcwo.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Thompson's Computer Warehouse Outlet Center offers "wholesale computer parts to the public." The selection is small—you may find only a dozen monitors or four CD-ROM drives—but the prices are fantastic. Browse the selection or print out a complete price sheet for easy reference.

techstore.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

TechStore offers hardware in dozens of categories, ranging from CPU upgrades to storage devices. The site also offers a wide range of software—everything from Microsoft applications to children's titles.

thelinuxstore.com

smooth navigation

If your PC is "penguin-powered," **The Linux Store** might be your place to shop. The site offers a small selection of hardware and software that's compatible with the popular alternative operating system. The community area offers Linux news, free downloads, and Web links.

www.thepartsfinder.com

smooth navigation

A friendly site that uses a graphical interface to simplify finding CPU fans, power supplies, cables, and screws, **ThePartsFinder.com** is targeted at computer hobbyists and corporate buyers. Even the most mundane parts, such as bezels, fans, and batteries, are listed.

tigerdirect.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

TigerDirect's site offers custom-built computers, tested and shipped within 48 hours. Shoppers in the mood for an adventure can order a build-it-yourself custom PC kit.

trudata.com

library of useful free software downloads • smooth navigation

True Data Technology's selection spans desktops, laptops, and palmtops, with an exceptional catalog of motherboards, hard drives, and other upgrade accessories. The site also features communication essentials for businesses, such as DSL equipment and telephony products.

www.usbstuff.com

Looking for gadgets to plug into your new Universal Serial Bus-equipped computer? **USB Stuff** has it all, including digital cameras, CD-RW drives, printers, modems, hubs, input devices, cables, and adapters. A sister site at ***www.firewirestuff.com*** stocks FireWire/IEEE 1394-compatible hardware.

SITE REVIEWS

usedcomputer.com

index of nonprofit organizations accepting computer donations

Used Computer Mall is a marketplace for used computer equipment. Shoppers can list hardware to sell or look for items to buy using the free classified ads. The site can also help you appraise equipment.

warehouse.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

The five "warehouses" under **MicroWarehouse's** roof sell PC hardware and software, Mac products, networking components, and supplies. Go to ***my.warehouse.com*** for auctions, free e-mail, and message boards.

PC DIRECT VENDORS

aventec.com

cancel an order before it is shipped and incur a $100 fee

Aventec offers preconfigured Intel- and AMD-based desktop systems. For do-it-yourselfers, the site sells the parts to build your own PC, including cases, accessory cards, and a wide variety of motherboards. Check out the Basement for clearance items.

axissys.com

easy ordering • good return policy

The **Axis Systems** Web store offers a best-price guarantee on its preconfigured notebooks, servers, desktops, and workstations.

buyabs.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Offering exceptional customer support on quality desktop and notebook systems is the goal at **ABS.** Shoppers can custom-configure a wide variety of PCs.

buy-atlas.com

good return policy

The **Atlas Micro** site sells a variety of preconfigured desktop PCs. Buyers can select from computers built around Pentium II and III, Celeron, Cyrix, and AMD processors.

cybermaxpc.com

downloadable drivers and online tech guide • smooth navigation

CyberMax offers Intel- and AMD-based systems in a wide variety of configurations to suit almost every need. The choices range from speedy desktop machines for gamers to light laptops for business travelers.

www.cyberpowerpc.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

From the DVD Dream to the Lightning Professional, the computers at **Cyberpower** have names as good as their warranties—three years, with a 30-day money-back guarantee.

dell.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

At the forefront of e-commerce, **Dell's** online store is renowned for its detailed information and ease of use. The site offers custom-built desktop and notebook PCs for home and business.

www.directplus.compaq.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Compaq DirectPlus carries desktops, portables, workstations, and servers. The Compaq Factory Outlet at ***www.compaqworks.com*** offers

discounts on refurbished and new overstocked merchandise.

e4me.com

smooth navigation

With PCs starting at $399, **eMachines** has found its niche in low-cost desktop and laptop computers. The site offers optional add-ons for your system, including a three-year extended service warranty, Internet access, and two sizes of monitors.

fpcdirect.fujitsu-pc.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Purchase **Fujitsu** notebook computers from the source. This Web site offers personal, business, and multimedia notebook computers, with several warranty options on each. Check the Refurbished Outlet for deals.

www.gateway.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

One of the biggest names in online computer sales, **Gateway** serves small businesses, corporations, educational institutions, government bodies, and home users. Its site sells desktops, portables, and a complete line of accessories.

ibm.com/shop

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Once synonymous with the phrase "personal computer," **IBM** still pushes the envelope. Its site offers business and home computers, notebooks, servers, thin clients, and the networking equipment to hook them all together.

kaypro.com

smooth navigation

Kaypro's first computer, released in the early '80s, used a Z-80 processor and ran the long-forgotten CP/M operating system. Today, the company's Web site sells decidedly more modern desktop computers, allowing shoppers to custom-configure Pentium III systems.

micronpc.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

One of the largest direct PC vendors, **micronpc.com** has a Web sales site broken into clear divisions to suit many types of customers, including home-office users, large businesses, government buyers, and buyers outside of the United States.

nutrend.com

smooth navigation

Custom-configure a home or business PC at **NuTrend.** The company offers a wide selection of desktop machines running your choice of Intel or AMD processors, each with a three-year warranty.

www.quantex.com

smooth navigation

Desktops, notebooks, servers, workstations, and peripherals—all are offered at **Quantex's** Web store. Shoppers who need assistance can get instant help using the site's live customer-service chat system. A community area allows Quantex PC users to keep in touch.

www.sagernotebook.com

leasing options available • smooth navigation • good return policy

Specializing in portable computers, **Sager** offers its customers a variety of notebook-computing options, from budget-minded machines to speedy multimedia units. The one-year warranty includes a 72-hour repair-turnaround guarantee.

www.shopacer.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Notebooks, desktops, and accessories are for sale at **Acer's** site, in addition to

SITE REVIEWS

ready-to-use PC bundles for home, business, and education. Reconditioned systems are available at the Acer Outlet.

shopprostar.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Each computer in **ProStar's** line of notebook PCs is backed by a 30-day money-back guarantee, a speedy repair promise, and free tech support.

store.apple.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

Apple's easy-to-use online store allows buyers to custom-configure the company's Power Mac G4, PowerBook, iMac, and iBook computers. A wide array of Mac-compatible software and accessories is also available.

vaiodirect.sel.sony.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

VAIO Direct sells Sony's line of desktops, notebooks, digital cameras, displays, and storage devices. The Xtras Direct arm offers add-ons for PCs, digital cameras, and other equipment.

www.winbook.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Focusing exclusively on notebook computers, **WinBook** offers machines with a 30-day money-back guarantee, a one-year warranty, and free technical support.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

www.att.net

AT&T WorldNet offers 450 local access numbers. The standard pricing plan is $19.95 per month for 150 hours of access. For $2 more, power users can get unlimited access. Families and Websmiths will appreciate the whopping 60MB of Web-page space and six e-mail addresses.

compuserve.com

Owned by America Online, the **CompuServe** service is aimed at professionals and is more powerful than AOL. Access is $9.95 per month for 20 hours, or $19.95 for unlimited access. Customers get seven e-mail addresses and 5MB of Web-page space.

csg.sprint.com/internet

Unlimited access to **Sprint Earthlink** costs $19.95 a month ($2 less if you are a Sprint long-distance customer). The service provides 6MB of Web-page space and an impressive 1,400 local-access phone numbers nationwide.

free.msn.com

no access to Usenet newsgroups

MSN Internet Access costs $21.95 per month for unlimited access, and the first month is free. You'll also find more than 800 U.S. and international access numbers. The service is not available for Mac users. MSN provides 12MB for Web pages.

www.mciworld.com

MCI WorldCom offers more than 750 local access numbers across the United States. It costs $19.95 for up to 150 hours of access each month ($3 less if you are an MCI long-distance customer). Additional online time is 99 cents an hour.

www.newaol.com

Known for its ease of use, **America Online** is the nation's most popular ISP. It offers many pricing plans, including one for $21.95 per month that gives unlimited access. Extras include members-only forums, 14MB of Web-page space, and seven e-mailboxes.

prodigy.com

A $19.95 monthly fee buys unlimited access to **Prodigy Internet.** Low-usage and deluxe-access plans are also available. Users get 6MB of Web-page space. Accounts come with only one e-mail address, but you can add five additional ones for $2 extra.

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 211

PC RESOURCES

cablemodeminfo.com

👍 helps you find a cable-ready ISP

Internet addicts considering upgrading to a cable modem—as well as users who have already made the jump—will find a cornucopia of information at **Cablemodeminfo.com.** You'll find reviews of cable-modem hardware and tips on sharing a modem between PCs.

dailyedeals.com

👍 smooth navigation

Before placing an order at your favorite e-commerce site, open a window to **DailyeDeals.** Its coupon pages offer codes that will instantly shave $5 to $20 off the bottom line at major online retailers. The First Time area links to sites that offer substantial discounts to first-time customers.

dcresource.com

👍 message board • links to digital-camera stores

The **Digital Camera Resource Page** is an unbiased, comprehensive source of information for digital-camera buyers and owners. Shoppers will enjoy the FAQ page, buyer's guide, and reviews.

Digital Camera Resource Page

dealtime.com

👍 site can alert you to new deals that meet your specifications by pager, e-mail, or Desktop Notifier software • smooth navigation

DealTime is an independent comparison-shopping service that helps you decide where to buy online. The site aggregates prices from hundreds of merchants, auctions, and classified sites.

expertcity.com

Extended listing this month. See this page.

56k.com

👍 downloads of the latest modem firmware • smooth navigation

Don't buy a new modem until you've visited **56K Modem Central.** Start with the primer on 56Kbps modems, learn the difference between technologies, then use the price shopper to find a model at the best price.

www.ftc.gov

👍 smooth navigation

The **Federal Trade Commission's** Web site is packed with useful information for consumers. The content covers the spectrum of consumer fraud and how to avoid it—online and offline. Articles address online auctions and protecting yourself when shopping on the Net.

gomez.com

👍 smooth navigation

Gomez.com offers ratings and customer reviews of e-commerce sites in two dozen categories, ranging from Web-based computer stores to drugstores, apparel shopping to online brokers. Read other customers' reviews and check their ratings on ease of use, customer confidence, and cost.

help-site.com

👍 links to more than 900 documents • smooth navigation

Help-Site is a great place to find FAQ lists, tutorials, manuals, and official as well as unofficial support. You'll find documentation on DOS, Windows, OS/2, and even Unix and VAX/VMS systems.

helptalk.com

👍 smooth navigation

Helptalk offers free assistance for most Windows software and hardware. The site hosts 30 message boards where you can ask questions about applications, operating systems, and programming.

modemhelp.com

👍 smooth navigation

SITE REVIEWS

ModemHelp provides technical support for modem users and a hearty list of links to other modem-related sites. You'll find tutorials, information on upgrading modems, tools for diagnosing problems, and discussion forums.

nextag.com

👍 product reviews available • smooth navigation

NexTag is a sophisticated buying service that can help frugal shoppers find the lowest possible prices on computer equipment, electronics, books, music, and videos. Entering your ZIP code allows NexTag to calculate shipping and tax for accurate pricing.

productreviewnet.com

👍 smooth navigation

Product ReviewNet collects abstracts of all sorts of products, including computers, appliances, sports equipment, and automobiles. Each abstract includes a citation (for magazine articles) or a link (for online reviews). The site includes a handy best-price search function.

www.thepubliceye.com

👍 customer-satisfaction database • smooth navigation

Find Internet businesses that deliver the best service—and avoid the ones that don't—with **ePublicEye.com,** a customer-service rating site. The site uses secret shoppers who patronize Internet businesses, conducting audits and rating the service of each business.

rammatters.com

👎 Flash 4 plug-in required for maximum effects

RAM Matters humorously explains how adding memory to your computer will make you more productive, and, so the site claims, better-looking. You'll get help in determining the type of memory your computer requires, plus installation tips.

scambusters.com

👍 information on viruses—real and fake

Internet ScamBusters is a site and a newsletter aiming to help Net users avoid getting cheated. Each newsletter focuses on a single type of scam, ranging from the merely annoying to the downright dangerous. Scams that target online shoppers are also covered.

usb.org

👍 message board fields questions • smooth navigation

Go to this site for technical information about the **Universal Serial Bus,** as well as answers to frequently asked questions and information about devices that use the bus. You'll find information for end users as well as developers.

CHECK IT OUT!

Expertcity Promises Real Help From Real People

expertcity.com

👍 smooth navigation
👎 currently no support for Mac or Unix operating systems

Stuck with a stubborn computer situation and don't know where to turn? **Expertcity** promises live, 24-hour assistance from a real human being. Help is available via a Web chat window or by telephone. A special browser plug-in allows experts to see what's on your computer screen and draw instructions on it like a whiteboard.

When you pose a question, experts across the Internet bid for your business. You can read their profiles, compare prices, then choose one you like. Most question fees range from $5 to $20, and you only pay if you're satisfied with the help you received.

windrivers.com

smooth navigation

WinDrivers.com is a comprehensive archive of drivers and DLL files for hard drives, sound cards, scanners, and other hardware. The site also provides links to antivirus updates and BIOS upgrades.

www.worldowindows.com

hundreds of downloadable drivers • smooth navigation

World O' Windows is a collection of useful news, resources, and tips about current and future versions of Microsoft Windows. Information and user tips abound. The site can be invaluable if you're considering upgrading or if your recent upgrade is causing problems.

SOFTWARE SITES

accountingshop.com

get credit for your old QuickBooks or Peachtree software when you upgrade • smooth navigation

The **Accounting Shop** Web store focuses entirely on accounting software. Shoppers can choose from an extensive catalog of high-end, midrange, and small-business packages, including AccuBooks, Business Works, MAS 90, and Peachtree. Easy-to-understand charts let you compare products by type, function, or price.

beyond.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Beyond.com is a surefire hit for PC and Mac software shoppers. Zoom in on the most popular software by viewing the top 10 sellers in a category. Beyond also offers extensive specs and customer reviews.

buycheapsoftware.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

The name says it all: Here you can **Buy Cheap Software.** This site offers a relatively small selection—about 300 titles—but it does sell popular programs from well-known publishers, including Adobe, Corel, Lotus, and Microsoft.

buyonet.com

site available in six languages • software available in 20 languages • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Buyonet specializes in downloadable commercial software. Hundreds of business applications, utilities, and games are available for download. For a nominal fee, shoppers can order a CD-ROM backup of purchased software.

chumbo.com

special orders accepted • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Chumbo.com's impressive selection includes traditional boxed software and downloadable titles. Shoppers can preorder software for shipment the day it is released, or peruse the selection of DVD movies.

cws.internet.com

free e-mail summary of software updates • smooth navigation

Stroud's Consummate Winsock Applications List is the ultimate one-stop download site for the latest and greatest in Internet software. Find and download Web development tools, browsers, and chat clients. You'll find comprehensive file lists, ratings, and extensive reviews.

dealdealdeal.com

smooth navigation

Dealdealdeal offers office suites, utility software, graphics programs, operating systems, games, and edutainment software. Although the selection isn't massive, shoppers will find a nice mix of new software and older titles—handy, whether you're looking for Microsoft Office 2000 or Office 97.

SITE REVIEWS

download.com

smooth navigation

When you're looking for shareware or free software, **Download.com** is a fine starting point. Well-written newsletters and down-to-earth reviews will help you find the perfect programs. The site links to tens of thousands of files of PC, Mac, Linux, Windows CE, and Palm software.

freewarefiles.com

smooth navigation

Windows users who want great software without having to spend any money can start at **Freeware Files.** This Web site offers links to gratis business applications, screen savers, games, and many other types of software. It features quick links to the most popular giveaways.

gamedealer.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

GameDealer.com offers software for a multitude of video-game consoles. You can browse by platform or seek out the type of game you prefer, such as sports simulations or family games. Check out the new releases, or preorder from the list of upcoming titles.

jumbo.com

smooth navigation

Jumbo is the perfect name for this monstrous file archive. In addition to programs for sale, you'll find thousands of commercial-application demos, along with loads of shareware and free software.

mightyscholar.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

It can be hard to find educational software that's right for your children's ages and learning needs. **Mighty Scholar** sells handpicked educational software, categorized by age range and subject.

999central.com

buy seven programs, get one free • smooth navigation • good return policy

The **999central.com** site offers 500 programs, each for $9.99. Shoppers can find a wide variety of software here, although educational, entertainment, and lifestyle programs are the most common.

soft4u.com

free shipping on orders over $300 • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Soft4U specializes in software for businesses, resellers, schools, and government offices. The company offers same-day shipping on most software. Special prices are available for staff and students at academic institutions.

www.softwarebuyline.com

smooth navigation

Software BuyLine has a massive selection of software titles for Windows, Mac OS, and Linux. The site sells Windows CE and Palm applications, too. Prices here are usually among the best. You'll also get easy access to product rebate information.

softwareshowcase.com

Software Showcase provides academic discounts on software, hardware, and computer books. To qualify for educational pricing, you must be an employee or student at an accredited educational institution.

softwarespectrum.com

Offering "smart solutions for smart companies," **Software Spectrum's** online catalog serves up 80,000 titles. Aimed at large and small businesses, the site provides frequent shoppers with purchasing-pattern reports, plus pricing and invoicing in a choice of currencies.

tucows.com

mirror sites speed downloads • smooth navigation

Bovine bliss: **Tucows** is an incredible archive of freeware and shareware. The category list and reviews make it easy to find the software you're seeking. In

the eBarn area, you can pay for, register, and download commercial software.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

www.americancentury.com

stock, bond, and option trading • retirement services • smooth navigation

Whether you are a conservative, moderate, or aggressive investor, **American Century** has a fund targeted to your needs.

ameritrade.com

sophisticated tools for options traders • smooth navigation

Offering a variety of IRAs, mutual funds, and other investment services, **Ameritrade** features low commissions for Internet, phone, and broker-assisted investing. Clients can receive timely information about stocks in their portfolios, by e-mail, pager, or mobile phone.

bondsonline.com

daily bond-market commentary • daily pricing of U.S. Treasury securities

Bonds Online offers market information about tax-free municipal bonds, Treasury bonds, funds, and brokers. You can also buy software that will calculate the prices and yields of your bonds.

clearstation.com

discussions about stocks and trading strategies • track an unlimited number of portfolios • smooth navigation

ClearStation is a financial-advisory Web site that helps investors make decisions by identifying and interpreting stock trends.

datek.com

free real-time quotes • after-hours trading • smooth navigation

Investors can build their own portfolios at **Datek,** using online resources to make educated decisions. The commission for most online trades is $9.99.

www.edgar-online.com

search the SEC database • historical data dating back to 1994 • smooth navigation

For up-to-date financial reports on companies, **Edgar Online** is a great place to start. Premium subscribers enjoy real-time SEC filings, insider transaction filings, and custom company watch lists.

etrade.com

community area offers discussion groups and online events

ETrade investors can learn about companies, then build and manage their own stock portfolios. Amenities include free streaming NASDAQ Level II quotes, IPO allocations, and real-time updates.

SITE REVIEWS

hoovers.com

4,000 company profiles • upcoming IPOs featured • smooth navigation

Hoover's Online offers countless resources for financial research. Free tools include daily financial headlines and the Stock Screener.

ino.com

option chains • free end-of-the-day updates by e-mail • smooth navigation

Devoted to futures and option trades, **Ino.com** offers a comprehensive site that includes daily financial headlines, quotes and charts, and lively forums.

kiplinger.com

forums let users ask questions and discuss financial topics • financial software and videos • smooth navigation

Kiplinger.com contains a vast array of financial information. Departments include taxes, insurance, investments, and home. Each area includes several articles and columns.

quicken.com/small_business

buy accounting software, stamps, and checks • smooth navigation

The **Quicken** site offers copious information for small-business owners. You'll find insightful articles on accounting, payroll, and taxes. Check the benefits and retirement page to learn how to choose an IRA, create a benefits policy, or provide health insurance.

schwab.com

24-hour customer service by phone and e-mail • special services for high-volume traders

Online investors can get help planning for college, retirement, or a rainy day at **Charles Schwab.** This site offers myriad investing options, as well as research and planning services.

stockmaster.com

create custom investment profiles • message boards for investment discussions • smooth navigation

StockMaster will tell you the trading price and details of any stock or investment fund, providing instant graphs of that stock's activity. A subscription service provides access to Baseline Company Profiles of more than 7,000 companies.

wallstreetcity.com

intuitive explanations of stock trends • free 30-day trial

Wall Street City's free services include quotes and graphs, real-time market commentary, and analyst reviews. Paying a monthly subscription fee adds access to historical quotes and portfolio monitoring.

waterhouse.com

offers checking accounts with electronic bill payment

At **TD Waterhouse's** Web site, the money-minded will find brokerage, banking, and mutual-fund services. Waterhouse freely makes available company news, reports, and charts to investors with inquiring minds. Online stock trading costs a flat $12 per transaction.

TD Waterhouse

wingspanbank.com

Extended listing this month. See this page.

www.wsrn.com

stock screener • links to publications on economy, equity, and markets

Wall Street Research Net offers thousands of links to help professional and private investors perform research on companies and mutual funds and locate important economic data. Brokerage reports and historical stock-price data are available for a fee.

CHECK IT OUT!

Wingspan Lets You Bank Virtually Anytime, Anywhere

wingspanbank.com

smooth navigation

One of the new breed of Internet banks, **WingspanBank.com** offers a full range of banking, loan, brokerage, and insurance services. Convenient banking options include interest-bearing checking accounts with direct deposit, as well as online bill-payment services. Credit cards, certificates of deposit, and financial-planning tools are also available. All tasks, from checking your account balance to applying for a home loan, can be carried out entirely on the Web.

Because the bank has no physical branches, Wingspan will reimburse its clients up to $5 per month for using other institutions' ATMs. All deposits are FDIC-insured.

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 220

ONLINE AUCTIONS

auctions.cnet.com

👍 well-defined categories make items easy to locate • smooth navigation

At **CNET Auctions,** a site dedicated to computer-product auctions, you can bid on the hardware and software listed, or put any computer items you'd like to sell on the block. Sellers range from individuals to well-known companies.

auctions.com

👍 offers auction types unavailable elsewhere • smooth navigation
👎 diverse category listings can be hit-or-miss

At **Auctions.com,** you'll find 6,000 categories of user-to-user auctions. The computer-auction listings offer a respectable quantity of PC hardware and software. You pay no fee to list items for sale, but the site takes a small percentage if your items sell.

auctions.goto.com

👍 trend-watch and message boards • smooth navigation

GoTo Auctions puts at your disposal a cross-auction search engine that hunts for items in 14 categories.

auctions.yahoo.com

👍 no charge to list items for sale • large selection of antiques and collectibles • smooth navigation

Yahoo's user-to-user auction site offers hundreds of thousands of items in diverse categories ranging from computer hardware to motorcycles. Collector clubs, message boards, and live chat let sellers and buyers talk, ask questions, and trade items.

auctions.zdnet.com

👍 the Auction Agent will notify you when a new auction meets your criteria • smooth navigation

The auction site of **ZDNet,** *Computer Shopper*'s parent company, offers primarily computer hardware and software. Categories include consumer electronics, gaming, domains, and services. You'll find user-to-user auctions, as well as new and used items offered by well-known businesses.

bid.com

The **Bid.com** business-to-user equipment auction site offers desktop and notebook computers, monitors, upgrades, cameras, and home electronics. Equipment may be new or refurbished.

ebay.com

👍 mind-boggling variety of products • all purchases up to $200 are insured • smooth navigation

The **eBay** auction site specializes in linking sellers and buyers of everything under the sun, from computer equipment to collectible toys. Chances are you can find anything you need here—from Beanie Babies to BIOS chips.

ewanted.com

👍 smooth navigation
👎 unique system, but the selection of "items wanted" is small compared to the number of products for sale on traditional auction sites

"Turning auctions upside down" is the goal of **eWanted.** The site allows potential buyers to list the items they're looking for. Sellers can submit offers, bidding down the price to earn the business. Categories include computer equipment, antiques, baby items, and real estate.

haggle.com

👍 smooth navigation

Haggle.com is a user-to-user auction site that has nearly 40 computer-related categories, plus "other stuff" auctions ranging from musical instruments to automobiles. Sellers will appreciate the free basic listings.

SITE REVIEWS

itrack.com

👍 auction news area

Simple to use, **iTrack.com** searches online auctions so you don't have to. Free memberships allow you to select five patterns (combinations of an auction site and an item) at a given time; for $25 per year, you can search 10 patterns at a time; and for $50, 20 patterns at a time. You can choose from 14 auction sites.

tradeout.com

👍 smooth navigation

TradeOut.com describes itself as a "business-to-business exchange for excess inventory and idle assets." It helps companies buy and sell surplus goods—from computers to car parts to construction supplies. Most items are sold at auction, but others are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

ubid.com

👍 smooth navigation

UBid's business-to-user auction house offers computers, electronics, housewares, sports items, jewelry, and gifts. If you can't wait several days to learn if you've won, click on the Auctions Closing This Hour link for quicker gratification.

SMALL-BUSINESS RESOURCES

atyouroffice.com

👍 free delivery on all orders more than $25 • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

The impressive **AtYourOffice.com** site offers everything for the office, from the essential to the mundane—30,000 products in all. You can limit searches to products that are generic brands, eco-friendly, or manufactured by women- or minority-owned businesses.

businessplans.org

👍 links to franchise information, public-relations resources, market analysis, and other sites

The **Center for Business Planning** offers a library of real business plans that you can download and review offline, an automated tool that can evaluate your marketing strategy, and a massive collection of links of interest to anyone starting a business.

consultlink.com

👍 consultant reference checks available • smooth navigation

ConsultLink is a directory service that helps businesses find contractors and independent consultants in a wide variety of high-tech fields, such as technology strategy, programming, and technical writing. ConsultLink charges a fee to access each profile. A flat-fee option allows unlimited profile views.

directdeposit.com

Since 1991, **National Payment Corp.** has been providing direct-deposit services for small and medium-size businesses. Using a secure Web browser, you can submit payroll for direct deposit to your employees' bank accounts. The site can exchange data with more than two dozen accounting programs.

efax.com

👍 smooth navigation • easy ordering

The **eFax.com** site gives you a personal fax and voice-mail number and delivers incoming messages by e-mail. The free basic service allows you to receive an unlimited number of faxes. For a monthly fee, eFax Plus lets you send faxes and convert incoming faxes to text.

e-stamp.com

👍 you don't have to be online to print postage
👎 buying postage requires special hardware

E-Stamp lets you buy postage over the Internet, then print that postage on your printer. You can use E-Stamp to send first-class, Priority Mail, Express Mail, and parcel-post items. The site sells envelopes, labels, postage scales, and other mailing supplies.

www.fedworld.gov/taxsear.htm

smooth navigation • order federal tax information on CD-ROM

At **FedWorld** you'll find downloadable tax forms for tax years 1992 through 1999 and instructions on filling them out, as well as IRS publications, tax tables, and tax regulations.

iprint.com

Extended listing this month. See this page.

iship.com

The **iShip** tracking tool is a one-stop spot for seeing the status of shipments sent with any major carrier. The QuickPrice function offers cost comparisons of the U.S. Postal Service, UPS, FedEx, and Airborne Express.

officebase.com

smooth navigation
orders may take three weeks to fill

From office machines to snacks, this office-supply store sells just about anything you could need in the workplace. **Office Base** is simple but effective, making it easy to find products.

onlinepayroll.com

Online Business Services will help any business become more efficient and receive more than 80 financial reports. Online Payroll can receive payroll information by telephone, fax, modem, or direct link with your electronic time clock.

paycheckcity.com

Paycheck City provides Web-based calculators to verify the accuracy of payroll checks. Employers can use the site to complete W-4 forms, and employees can verify what they should be paying in federal, state, and Social Security taxes.

www.pointofsale.com

Pointofsale.com specializes in retail essentials, including point-of-sale software and hardware, bar-code scanners, magnetic-stripe readers, and receipt printers. FAQs answer basic questions about bar codes, POS systems, and cash drawers.

CHECK IT OUT!

Label Your Life at iPrint.com

iprint.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

With the help of **iPrint.com,** creating personalized items for business is a snap. Place your mark on stationery, rubber stamps, business cards, and sticky notepads, or create your own nifty promotional items like key chains, T-shirts, and golf balls. This handy site allows you to upload a company logo and mint a custom design in minutes. You can save your work in intervals and finish up whenever you're done. Use one of iPrint.com's ready-made quotes if you'd like.

The site can handle both special and high-volume orders. Need a *little help? The Customer Service* area gives design tips and a glossary of useful terms. First-time customers are eligible for freebies such as personalized rubber stamps and rolls of address labels.

SITE REVIEWS

smartship.com

helps find your nearest package drop-off site
limited information about smaller carriers

SmartShip makes it easy to select the right carrier for your shipments. Enter the weight and other details about your package, and the site will help you choose the best major carrier, whether your priority is speed or cost.

www.ssa.gov

smooth navigation

The **Social Security Administration's** site can make the necessary task of paying Social Security understandable to small-business owners. The Guide for Employers offers detailed help with employer wage-filing responsibilities. The FAQ answers questions about documentation and filing deadlines.

stamps.com

no special hardware required
must be online to print postage

Stamps.com lets customers buy postage online and print it using an inkjet or laser printer. You can send items first-class, Priority, and Express Mail. Delivery confirmation and certified mail are also available.

usa.net

USA.net can set up a Web post office for your business, letting you and your employees have instant access to e-mail from any Web browser. The long list of standard and premium features includes necessities such as spell-checking and language translation.

www.virtualpayroll.com

Virtual Payroll simplifies the cycle of payroll and taxes for small businesses. Through this secure site, company and employee information is entered to set up initial payroll accounts; with periodic updates, employees are paid by direct deposit within 48 hours.

webex.com

offers Web-based business collaboration
requires a special plug-in

WebEx is an online collaboration system that hosts thousands of daily meetings. Share documents and applications with colleagues who have your meeting-room password and the WebEx plug-in. Free "virtual offices" offer personalized conference rooms with online calendar, address-book, document-storage, and directory tools.

TRAVEL AND LEISURE

all-hotels.com

smooth navigation

All-Hotels.com connects travelers to a whopping 60,000 online-bookable hotels. The main directory will help you find lodging around the world, sometimes at reduced rates for Internet users. Links to each hotel's home page are provided when available.

www.biztravel.com

tracks frequent-flyer miles automatically • smooth navigation

Research your destination, plan your trip, and make airline, car, and hotel reservations at **Biztravel.com.** Catering to the business traveler, Biztravel offers unique services, including predeparture pager alerts and the ability to download your itinerary to your palmtop.

expedia.com

smooth navigation

At **Expedia.com,** travelers can book flights, hotel rooms, cars, vacation packages, and cruises. A fare calendar makes it easy for shoppers to see the lowest airfares available. The FareTracker tool keeps tabs on fares to particular destinations and e-mails alerts.

got.com

information on major chains and regional providers • smooth navigation

Shoppers can make instant reservations for air travel, rental cars, and hotels at **Global Online Travel.** Vacation packages are available, or you can design your own. The Global Spotlight section offers information on myriad topics ranging from spa vacations to flying with pets.

hoteldiscount.com

smooth navigation

The Hotel Reservations Network allows travelers to comparison-shop, find accommodations, and make reservations in 2,000 hotels in 50 cities in the United States, Europe, and Canada. **Hotel Discounts** specializes in providing accommodations during peak sold-out periods.

Hotel Discounts

lvrs.com

With 50 Las Vegas hotels from which to choose, **Las Vegas Reservations System** lets shoppers price and book their accommodations without a lot of calling around. Check out what each hotel has to offer, from museums to roller coasters.

1travel.com

smooth navigation • Ask the Expert feature offers advice on air travel

The **1travel.com** site boasts a huge variety of specialty vacations, plus a wide array of options in destinations and lodging. Check out your travel choices, such as train trips, cruises, or tours. See all the lodging alternatives: apartments, bed-and-breakfasts, even spas.

placestostay.com

smooth navigation

A tool for finding lodging and making reservations, **PlacesToStay.com** lists more than 10,000 hotels, inns, resorts, and bed-and-breakfasts. Book, modify, or cancel your reservation online, and you get an instant confirmation.

tickets.com

smooth navigation • buy tickets directly or at auction

Entertainment, sports, and travel: If you need a ticket to get in, chances are you can buy that ticket at **Tickets.com.** The site also offers information about—and tickets to—family entertainment venues, including museums, zoos, and theme parks.

travel.discovery.com

world maps

From the cable channel of the same name, the **Travel Channel** offers pointers to vacation-information sites and more. The forums let you discuss educational vacations and critique travel books. The shopping area offers CD-ROMs, books, videos, and deals on tours and cruises.

travelite.org

links to commercial sites where you can buy travel essentials

The **Travelite FAQ** offers tips on traveling light—with just a carry-on bag and without the worry of losing checked bags. The site reviews luggage, gives wardrobe selection tips, explains electrical adapters, and more.

travelocity.com

smooth navigation

Travelocity provides secure online transactions for air, car, and hotel reservations. At this site, you can research potential destinations, find a bed-and-breakfast, make your reservations, and research cruises.

travelscape.com

no-risk reservation guarantee • around-the-clock customer service by phone

Simply choose from **Travelscape.com's** selection of major U.S. cities, then pick the dates of your vacation. This Web-based travel store outlines the options and lets you determine your itinerary.

travel.yahoo.com

smooth navigation

At **Yahoo Travel,** you can buy your next vacation or plan ahead. You can search by destination, activity (such as cruises, adventure tours, and sports), or lifestyle (such as vegetarian, singles, or special *needs*).

SITE REVIEWS

trip.com

unique articles in travelers' NewsStand • smooth navigation

Visit **Trip.com** when you want to book a flight, a rental car, or a hotel room. The cool FlightTracker will give you details about any current flight, including location, estimated landing time, and type of aircraft.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

consumer-direct.com

smooth navigation

Shopping for something simple, such as a surge protector? Or complicated, like C-Band satellite receivers? Either way, **Consumer Direct Warehouse** provides a selection of brands and styles to explore.

crutchfield.com

online specials deliver deep discounts • two-day delivery on most items • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Here's a site to visit whether you're in the market for a home theater or a car stereo. **Crutchfield** also offers toll-free technical assistance.

800.com

review your complete order history • smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

The **800.com** site specializes in video and audio systems, personal electronics, video games, and movies. See side-by-side comparisons of products. The selection includes digital cameras, televisions, and home and car stereos.

etown.com

smooth navigation

shipping costs and return policies can vary among etown.com partners

Consumer electronics is the focus at **etown.com,** a site offering gadgets such as cordless phones and flat-screen televisions. The site also serves up consumer-electronics news, informative features, and a knowledge bank that explains how to buy, use, and troubleshoot equipment.

giantsavings.com

smooth navigation

GiantSavings.com offers a wide selection of home electronics, ranging from DVD players to PDAs.

globe-mart.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

Global Mart's electronics area offers audio/video components, flat-panel displays, digital cameras, and multifunc-

CHECK IT OUT!

ValueAmerica Cuts Costs on Every Sale

va.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering

ValueAmerica offers an array of home-entertainment products, including audio and video equipment, cameras, and communications products. Plus, you'll find movies, games, and other media to use with them. The Cameras & Optics area sells gizmos ranging from single-lens-reflex cameras to binoculars to night-vision viewers.

The site also offers computer software and hardware, including preconfigured systems from major manufacturers such as Compaq and Apple. Extended service plans are available for digital cameras, PDAs, and other products. Online shoppers enjoy free shipping, and purchases earn buyers "value dollars" to be applied to future purchases.

tion printers. The selection also includes handheld PCs and uninterruptible power supplies.

hifi.com

smooth navigation • easy ordering • good return policy

Hifi.com offers home-audio and home-theater products for everyone from the budget-minded to the most sophisticated audiophile. You get free shipping and a no-questions-asked 45-day return policy on most products.

igo.com

real-time online support • smooth navigation • easy ordering

The **iGo** site sells electronic necessities for folks on the go, including PDAs, cellular phones, and carrying cases. The extensive catalog of add-ons includes antennae, batteries, and other accessories for users of mobile digital devices.

servicemerchandise.com

smooth navigation • good return policy

many items only available for in-store pickup

In business for nearly 40 years, **Service Merchandise** is a catalog showroom offering electronics, health and exercise equipment, toys, travel items, and jewelry. The electronics area of its Web site sells home-office products, video equipment, sound systems, and cameras.

theweb-shop.com

easy ordering

Shop **The Web Shop Superstore** for a wide variety of home-electronics offerings, including computers, home-office equipment, cameras, camcorders, and home and car audio.

SITE REVIEWS

va.com

Extended listing this month. See p. 222.

CAMERAS

abbeycamera.com

links to manufacturer sites • smooth navigation • good return policy

Abbey Camera's catalog of more than 10,000 cameras and accessory items will impress even veteran photographers. The options range from 35mm cameras to medium- and large-format models, darkroom supplies, and professional gear.

keh.com

message board offers technical advice • smooth navigation • good return policy

In business for 20 years, **KEH Camera Brokers** peddles new items as well as good-condition used equipment. The automated buying service gives an immediate quote on what KEH will pay for your used equipment.

www.normancamera.com

good return policy

From point-and-shoot models to high-tech digital cameras, you're likely to find it in **Norman Camera's** catalog. See a large selection of film scanners, video cameras, and accessories.

photoalley.com

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ritzcamera.com

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In addition to offering cameras and accessories, **Ritz Camera** also sells photo albums and frames. Shoppers with a retail location nearby can see their photos online in one hour, then order reprints or merchandise with a photo on it.

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An independent bookstore based in Berkeley, Calif., **Cody's Books** offers a searchable catalog of its 150,000 in-stock titles. In addition, the store can order any in-print book, plus books published in some other countries. The site offers thoughtful recommendations and reading lists.

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Link to sister site DVD.com for interviews, DVD technical support, and news. If you need help with DVD basics, check out the tutorials in DVD 101.

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Reel.com sells DVDs, VHS videos, and soundtracks. In addition to a mammoth selection, this site serves up movie reviews, a filmography database, and an impressive search engine. You'll find film news, interviews with moviemakers, and a daily trivia challenge.

samgoody.com

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Sam Goody offers movies, music, and more. The "more" includes software, video games, sheet music, and related books.

www.towerrecords.com

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The **Tower Records** site features a huge selection of music and videos. The search tool lets shoppers find music based on the artist, the album, or even the name of a single song. The Pulse online magazine includes reviews and interviews from pop and classical artists.

TIPS For Buying School Supplies Online

> Check out office-supply stores, such as Staples ***(www.staples.com)*** and OfficeMax ***(www.officemax.com)***, which traditionally offer special deals to students in the fall.

> On-campus bookstores aren't known for their low prices on textbooks. Buy your books online to save that cash for pizza and other essentials. Many college textbook stores have cropped up, including UTbooks.com and Student Textbooks ***(www.studenttextbooks.com)***.

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